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DEPARTMENT FOR D AND AF/SPG

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KPKO](#) [MOPS](#) [SU](#) [AU](#) [UN](#)
SUBJECT: SUDAN/DARFUR: FUR TRIBAL LEADERS READY FOR PEACE

Classified By: DCM Andrew Steinfeld; REASON: 1.4(B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: SLA/W Leader Abdel Wahid Nur may yet sign the Darfur Peace Agreement, Fur tribal leaders told CDA Hume on June 14. Hume emphasized the USG's encouragement and support for the peace process, pointing out President Bush's personal letter to Nur. The leaders -- including some who had recently met Nur in Nairobi -- responded with gratitude, noting that DPA was a way to move forward despite its faults. Nur's refusal to sign the agreement seemed to be based more on his personal feelings than on any reasoned argument about the text, they suggested. The key task now is to persuade Nur to join, which should convince many Fur the DPA is not simply a Zagahwa agreement. Hume encouraged the leaders to work together to build consensus in favor of peace, and to engage the AU and UN to find ways to increase security on the ground. END SUMMARY.

Four Fur Leaders Favor DPA, with Reservations

¶2. (C) Charge Hume met with four prominent Fur tribal leaders on June 14 in Khartoum to mobilize their support for the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). All four are generally in favor of the agreement, with reservations; several are close to Fur SLA/W commander Abdel Wahid Nur, whom they recently met in Nairobi. Hume listened to their frustrations about the DPA, but emphasized that the agreement was the product of nearly two years of negotiations by the parties themselves, together with the African Union. It could be a real turning point for Darfur, he said, but only if the parties decided to make the turn. Nur and others who had not signed the DPA had complained that the U.S. was pressuring them to join the process, just as it had pressured Mini Minawi, but Hume rebutted these charges by sharing a copy of President Bush's letter to Nur. "This isn't pressure -- this is encouragement and support," the Charge said. Hume announced he would travel to El Fashir and Nyala soon to meet with other Fur leaders, and asked them to help him mobilize Fur opinion in favor of the DPA.

¶3. (C) Ahmed Adam Rijal, the hereditary maqdam (district chief) of Nyala, thanked Hume and recounted his recent meeting with Nur in Nairobi. Nur remained obstinate in his refusal to sign the DPA, but was unable to fully explain his objections. Rijal told Nur they agreed that the DPA had many problems, but asked Nur what other alternatives he had. Nur had never answered this question. Rijal plans to see Nur again soon, and will continue to try to persuade him to join the peace process.

President Bush Letter Seen as Guarantee; UN Force Necessary

¶4. (C) Salih Mamoud, a lawyer for the Sudan Organization

Against Torture (SOAT) and Communist member of the National Assembly thanked the U.S. for its support. Despite the failings of the DPA, no one was prepared to go back and re-open the negotiations. "We have to find the best ways, the most practical ways, to bring back Abdel Wahid," he said, noting that Nur had never had a good, trusted advisor. However, Mamoud cautioned against thinking that Nur's participation was not necessary, or that there could be peace in Darfur without the Fur, who remain the largest ethnic group in the region. Mini Minawi, a Zaghawa, may control more territory or have more troops than Nur, but he still represents a minority tribe. Mamoud especially welcomed President Bush's letter, noting that he had never seen it before; "This is a guarantee!" he exclaimed. He also argued strongly for a UN force in Darfur, because an AU or Arab League force would not be trusted by the people. Moreover, to be seen as legitimate, the UN force had to include troops not from Africa. Justice was also critical issue, but the question of compensation should not stop the DPA from moving forward.

Highest Priority: Safe Returns of People to Villages

15. (C) Adbulgassem Seif Al-Din, a SPLM member of the National Assembly -- and Abdel Wahid Nur's father-in-law -- agreed, but noted that the highest priority was the return of the people to their villages in safety. "There should be no such thing as blood money at this stage," he remarked. He also welcomed President Bush's letter, remarking that he would encourage Nur to write back, and recalled Bush's recent comments to Iraqi PM Al-Maliki: "When America makes a promise, it keeps it." Al-Din also echoed Mamoud's

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observations about the lack of good advisors around Nur, at one point suggesting the U.S. send Alex de Waal to Nairobi, and emphasized the importance of the Fur to the peace process. "If Abdel Wahid signs, the Fur will support the agreement," he noted, adding that he was cautiously optimistic Nur would listen to other Fur leaders.

DPA Vague, General; Signing Reflects "Tribal" Views

16. (C) Ibrahim Ahmed Diraige, a consultant for the World Food Program and son of Federal Democratic Alliance chair Ahmed Ibrahim Diraige, remarked that Nur feels guilty, and even personally responsible, for the genocide in Darfur, which has led 70 percent of his tribesmen to lose life or property. Nur's refusal to sign was based on his personal feelings, not on a careful reading of the agreement. "The DPA is very vague and general," Diraige noted, "but there are grounds to move forward." He particularly emphasized the "tribal way of thinking" in Darfur, especially in the split between Menawi and Nur. "The Fur in the camps think that the Zaghawa support the DPA because Minawi has signed, but that they won't support it until Abdel Wahid does. But if Abdel Wahid signs, there will be dancing in the camps." Diraige also saw reason to think that Nur might join the process: "If anyone can influence him, they can!" he joked, pointing to Mamoud and Al-Din.

Hume: Security and Justice

17. (C) Hume thanked the leaders for their comments, and addressed the twin issues of justice and security. The U.S. understood the need for immediate compensation to help those in camps rebuild their lives, but the question of justice was more difficult. If we can't stop the killing, we can't get to justice, Hume noted -- to the agreement of all present. Security was even harder. Ultimately, the people of Darfur

must start trusting their own government again, but in the meantime, they must rely on the AU and the UN, and work with them. Hume asked them to identify specific districts where peacekeepers might be able to start making progress on security.

Fur: No Al-Qaida in Darfur

18. (C) The leaders responded by noting the importance of community policing in building security. In some camps, AMIS had even deputized young men to help maintain order in the camps, drawing on an old Fur system of "hakura," or local enforcement. This system helped residents monitor foreigners who had taken up residence in the camps, including those from Chad, the Central African Republic, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania. (Note: Hume asked whether there was any truth to government reports that there were Al-Qaida cells in Darfur; "Nonsense!" Al-Din responded, noting that the Fur would quickly root out any Arab that came into the camps. Al-Qaida attempted to land a plane once, but the people killed them, he recalled. End note.) The leaders also agreed that there were more opportunities for building security in some areas than others, but warned against attempts to create model villages, which the Government had tried in 2004. The people want to go back to their original land, not some new area, Diraige noted. Anything else would be ethnic cleansing.
HUME